pleased to state when Government are going to remove the ceiling in the Payment of Bonus Act and enhance the ceilings in the Payment of Gratuity Act to make it at par with the gratuity for the Central Government employees?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): No time frame has been fixed for any amendment of Payment of Bonus Act, 1965 and Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972.

Lockout in the Patriot Newspaper Office

2495. SHRIMATI CHANDRA KALA PANDEY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether a lockout was declared by the Management of the Patriot Newspaper in June, 1996 and the workers have not been getting salaries since May, 1996;

(b) whether Government have taken any action to have the lockout lifted; and if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have taken any steps to ensure payment of salaries to the workers, who have been subjected to untold suffering and hardships; and

(d) if no action has yet been taken the steps Government now intend to take to have the lockout lifted and salaries disbursed?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHAL): (a) to (d) The Management of United India Periodicals (P) Ltd., New Delhi, the publishers of Patriot Newspaper, declared a Lock-out in the establishment w.e.f. 14.6.96. Subsequently the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi issued prohibitory order on 5.8.96 under section 10(3) of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 prohibiting continuance of the Lockout declared by the Patriot Newspaper Management. The operation of the Prohibitory orders were stayed by the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi vide their order dated 12.9.96. Discussions were held by the Government with both the parties.

Dues of Sugarcane Farmers in Uttar Pradesh

2496. PROF. NAUNIHAL SINGH: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's order to Uttar Pradesh Government to clear at least 50% of the Rs.900 crore dues to sugarcane farmers within one month is unlikely to produce relief to the hard-hit sugarcane farmers;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is a fact that with most of the sugar mills in the State in the red, it would be very difficult for them to clear the dues within the stipulated time coupled with the State Government facing a financial crunch; and

(d) if so, the manner in which this predicament is being coped with?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) On the basis of the information furnished by the Government of Uttar Pradesh, against the outstanding arrears of Rs.900.34 crores as on 15.6.1996, a payment of Rs. 456.11 crores has been made till 31.7.1996 whereas the target set for the period was to ensure payment of Rs.450.00 crores. The Government of Uttar Pradesh has also informed that the arrears of cane price relating to the sugar season 1995-96 on 24.9.1996 were only Rs. 307.11 crores.

(c) and (d) Question does not arise.

Export of inferior quality Indian goods by traders

2497. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) wheher Government are aware of the severe criticism by the Ugandan business Community that visited the country recently for the export of inferior quality of Indian goods, terming many of the Indian traders as "cheats";

(b) if so, the details of the traders that have brought disrepute to the country in the matter of exporting inferior quality items; and

(c) the action Government propose to take against them in the matter?;

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) to (c) The Govt. have noted the newsitem nomenclatured 'Indians send worst goods to Africa', which appeared in 'The Times of India' dated 19th Nov. 1996. While the Confederation of Indian Industry, New Delhi have invited a business delegation from Uganda, no specific complaint from Ugandan importers against Indian exporters for export of sub-standard quantity goods has come to the notice.

Lack of working capital support to Scooters India Limited

2498. SHRI GUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Scooters India Limited is unable to raise the production due to lack of working capital support;

(b) whether Government have been granting non plan loans instead of plan loans; and

(c) if so, the facts and details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) Scooters India Ltd. (SIL) has been considerably improving its production performance and the production during the current year upto 31.10.96 was 9357 3-wheelers as against 6249 3-wheelers in the corresponding period last year. Government has provided guarantee to the Bank in respect of working capital finance for the Company. Government has also agreed to revise SIL in the present set up as per the revival scheme sanctioned by BIFR with necessary cash infusion amounting to Rs. 22.45 crores including Non-Plan support of Rs. 6.20 crores for one time settlement of the dues of the financial institutions, and plan support of Rs. 11.00 crores for investment in plant and machinery and other financial reliefs and concessions.

Welfare schemes for street children

2499. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to cover street children under welfare schemes;

(b) if so, the welfare schemes introduced by Government for the welfare of the street children;

(c) the new schemes proposed to be introduced by the Government; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) and (b) The Government is already operating a Scheme for the Welfare of Street Children since 1993-94. Under this scheme grants-in-aid are provided to voluntary organisations working for the care, protection and development of street children upto the extent of 90% of the cost of the project.

(c) and (d) At present no proposal for introduction of a new scheme is under the consideration of the Government.

Revision in rates of royalty on minerals

2500. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the royalty on minerals is being revised once in every three years;

(b) if so, the details of the revisions made during the preceding six years;

(c) the details of the minerals on which the royalty has been revised in different states of the North-East Region during each of the last six years; and

(d) the minerals on which royalty is proposed to be revised during the current year?